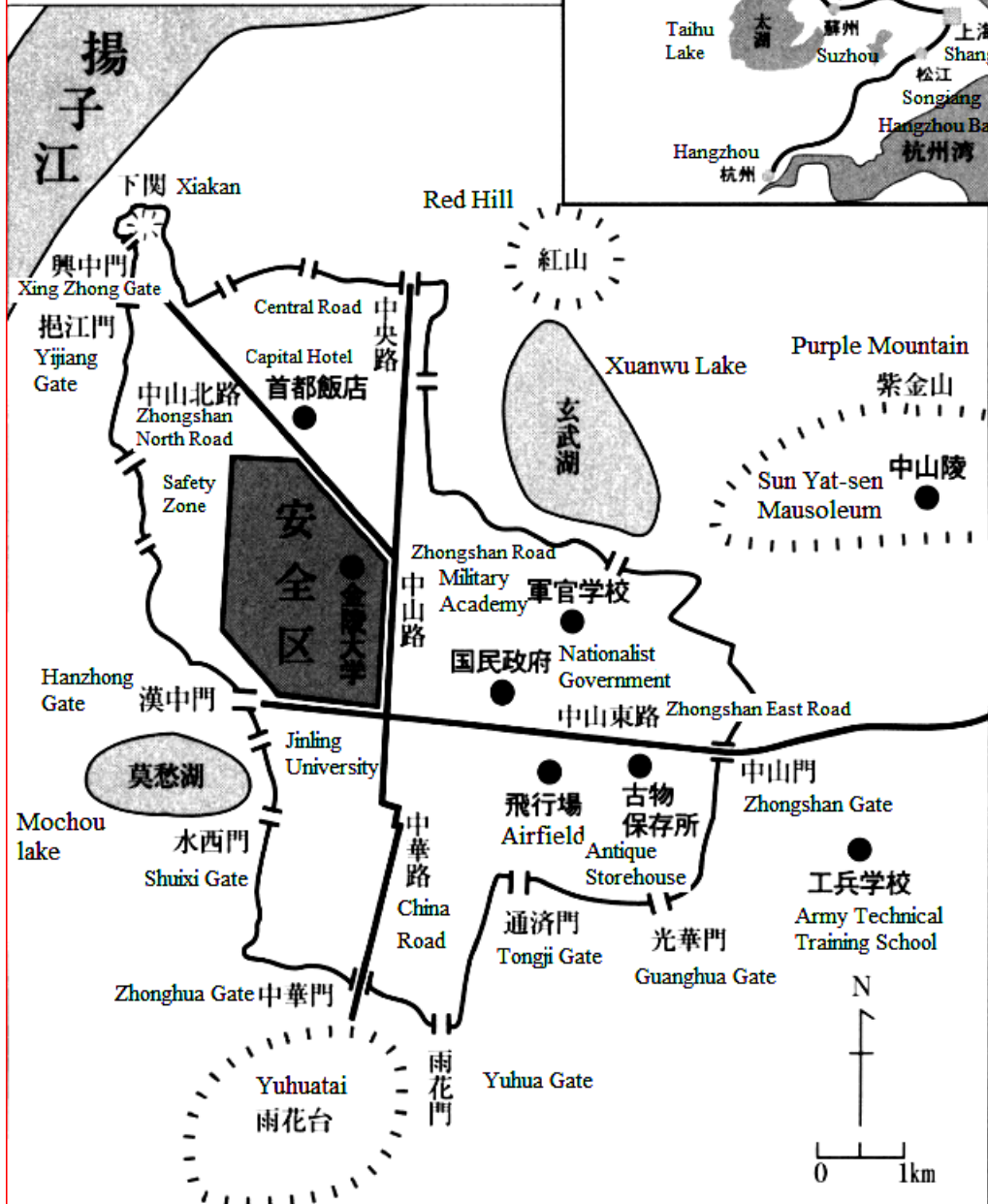
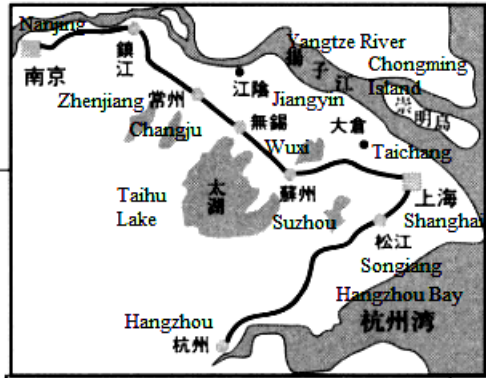


# **The Nanjing Incident: Japanese Eyewitness Accounts**

**-Testimony from 48 Japanese Who Were There-**

**By Ara Ken'ichi**

# Rough Map of Nanjing as of 1937 〈1937年当時の南京略図〉



城壁で囲まれた南京城内の面積は、現在の東京・山の手線で囲まれた地域の広さとほぼ同じである。そのうち、安全区内の面積は約3.8平方キロメートル。

## Introduction

This book is highly significant in that it contains the words of military officials, journalists, diplomats and others who were in Nanjing in 1937. The so-called “Nanjing Incident” is a very controversy issue – even what to name it is controversial. The most obvious path to take to arrive at the facts is to listen to the people who were actually there that time. Therefore, Mr. Ara Kenichi adopted this approach for this book—the most forthright and honest from a journalistic perspective.

What did the Japanese do or did not do? What did they see? Was there anything that they saw that could be considered a massacre? After you read this book, you will see the truth.

And there is another book, that is, *The Politics of Nanjing*, written by Prof. Kitamura Minoru.<sup>1</sup> In his book, Prof. Kitamura carefully checked every piece of evidence, one by one, presented by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE) prosecution corroborating an alleged “Nanjing Incident”. He found that at the time, in Nanjing, an organization called the Red Swastika (紅卍字會) Society and a charitable society called the Suzendo (崇善堂) handled Chinese corpses. The Red Swastika reported that they buried around 43,000 remains and the Suzendo 110,000. The total number of corpses became the basis for the numerous victims who were said to have been massacred by Japanese soldiers.

Regarding the Suzendo, whether this organization even existed at the time is questionable. The only evidence presented by the Chinese concerning this organization was a single document, that the Suzendo requested a part or parts for their only car. According to the document, the Suzendo had a single car, that they transported 100,000 bodies with this car within a one month period, April 1938, and that they buried all of the bodies; this defies belief. Suzendo’s claim became all the more suspicious after the Chinese presented their document.

The Suzendo is mentioned in Mr. Ara’s book as well. Captain Onishi Hajime, who was an officer of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army as well as the Chief of the Special Duty Organization at the time, told Mr. Ara that he was very familiar with the Red Swastika Society, which worked hard in burying bodies. Concerning the Suzendo, he said:

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<sup>1</sup> Kitamura Minoru, *The Politics of Nanjing*, University Press of America, New York, NY, 2007, [*Nankin Jiken no tankyu*], Tendensha, Tokyo, 2001.

“I have never heard of them at the time and I knew nothing about them. Nevertheless, after the War, it is said that they had worked quite a lot. But during those times, I knew nothing about them at all.”

Mr. Onishi said he knew nothing about the Suzendo--how could they possibly have been unknown to him, a group that allegedly worked much harder than the Red Swastika Society?

Mr. Onishi of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army entered Nanjing on December 13, 1937 and from February 1938, he served in Nanjing for a year as the Chief of the Special Duty Organization of Nanjing. The Chief of the Nanjing Special Duty Organization served as a Japanese representative to the Chinese. Due to his official capacity and period of duty, Mr. Onishi was in the best position to grasp the real situation in Nanjing and the state of Nanjing's citizens. And Mr. Onishi said that he had never heard of the Suzendo. He does not intend any disrespect to the Suzendo. He simply stated things he had seen and the things he knew. His objective statements coincide with the results of scholarly investigation; the truth lies there.

Since the IMTFE, and the ensuing campaign by the *Asahi Shimbun* and its reporter, Mr. Honda Katsuichi, the notion “Nanjing = Massacre” was imprinted in the minds of the Japanese people and Japanese people in turn obsessed over the thought that they had done wrong, that they had done cruel things in Nanjing.

However, did our parents and grandparents do such cruel things? Were our parents and grandparents so cruel that they killed hundreds and thousands of innocent people? Have we become such that we can no longer truly believe ourselves?

History is about human relationships as well as familial relationships. After the War, we have been taught to deny many things, but we should not deny faith in family or love of the Japanese people--what we need to do is to face history with calm and propriety.

Surely, we have made mistakes. We have a decent mind to admit our mistakes and take responsibility for a reckless war. But, after the War, our understanding of history was based on falsified information. We have been told repeatedly through text books that we have done wrong and we simply believed it.

We need to reflect on the issues on our own and individually verify the truth. We should understand real history and not forget to mourn and appreciate the people who gave their

lives for Japan, and the people who sacrificed themselves for Japan as condemned “war criminals”.

History has many facets, such as “history based on documents”, “history based on news reports”, and “history handed down from generation-to-generation”, which is, in fact, most neglected in modern Japan.

In Europe and in other Asian nations, and even in the USA, where nuclear families are on the rise, stories of their families and ancestors are passed down from generation-to-generation. However, Japan is the rare country that lost such a tradition. Our memories of previous generations, of how they lived, of what they felt and of what they thought, are being shut out and this tendency is getting stronger, year after year. Today, many Japanese know nothing but the superficial history espoused in text books--no wonder Japanese people have no physical sense of a commitment to history.

The current book compensates for the lack of “history handed down from generation-to-generation”. On behalf of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, this book will tell you of the history which they themselves experienced.

More than half a century has passed--most of the people who experienced the war have passed away. In completing this book, Mr. Ara visited with the interviewees decades ago and currently there are few survivors.

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, terrorist attacks and wars around the world, one after another, forced us to rethink the definition of nation, of race, and of religion. In addition, in Japan, issues arising concerning history text books and Yasukuni Shrine made us renew our thinking of our history. We now stand at a crossroads, where we must decide what we value most of our nation and of the global society to be built and how to protect what we value.

Read this book and judge the facts of the matter for yourself. In an era of global turmoil, we must reconsider our history and our nation in a cool-headed manner.

Sakurai Yoshiko

Journalist,

President, Japan Institute for National Fundamentals

## Preface

On July 7, 1937, the Japanese army held a nighttime training exercise near the Marco Polo Bridge, which was located in a suburb of Beijing. Suddenly, they were shot at. The Japanese army determined that a Chinese army unit was shooting at them and immediate talks were held.

Both sides continuously negotiated. Nevertheless, small-scale skirmishes continued, and fighting escalated such that on July 27, three Japanese army divisions were dispatched to the Beijing area.

At the time, the largest number of Japanese residents in China was in Shanghai. While fighting in Beijing continued, outbursts of violence erupted in Shanghai. There were Japanese factories in Shanghai and the Japanese Naval Landing Forces protected factories and Japanese residents. As the days wore on, Shanghai grew more and more dangerous.

On August 9, Lieutenant Junior Grade Oyama Isao of the Japanese Naval Landing Forces was shot to death. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, Naval Landing Forces and the Chinese Nationalist Army clashed. The Chinese Army force was several times larger than the Naval Landing Forces, meaning that Japanese people in China were in serious danger. As a matter of fact, on July 29, in Tongzhou (通州), east of Beijing, 223 Japanese citizens were massacred-- this is known as the Tongzhou Incident.

The Shanghai Expeditionary Army was formed and dispatched to Shanghai. General Matsui Iwane, who was renowned for his knowledge of China, was assigned as the Commander of the Army.

The Chinese Army, which built their positions over a period of years, was equipped with German weapons and trained by the German Army. Powerful military units awaited the arrival of the Japanese Army. The Shanghai Expeditionary Army landed on August 23 and a fierce battle began. The Japanese Army fought hard but after a couple of months, they were unable to control Shanghai. Japanese Army casualties were mounting.

On November 5, the Japanese 10<sup>th</sup> Army, which was newly organized, landed at Hangzhou Bay in order to attack the Chinese Army from the rear. Attacked from behind, the Chinese Army panicked and routed.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Army, which had just landed and not spent much time in action, thought the best course would be to pursue the routed enemy, advance to attack the capital city of Nanjing, and then offer peace terms. They submitted their plan and began to pursue the routed enemy. Soon, the Shanghai Expeditionary Army controlled Shanghai and submitted a similar plan as well.

On December 1, General Staff Headquarters issued the order to attack Nanjing. In order to direct both the Shanghai Expeditionary Army and the 10<sup>th</sup> Army, the Central China Area Army was organized and General Matsui was appointed as commander. For the Nanjing attack, the number of Japanese army soldiers was about 70,000 to 80,000.

At first, the capture of Nanjing was estimated to take place in the middle of January 1938 but pursuit by the Japanese Army was so rapid that on December 10, 1937 the 36<sup>th</sup> Regiment (originating from Sabae, Fukui Prefecture), plunged through Guanghua Gate (光華門) Gate, and in the afternoon of December 12, the 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment (from Oita Prefecture) set up ladders and started to scale the wall of Nanjing Castle.

On the evening of December 12, the Chinese Army was given the order to retreat. Since avenues of escape were covered by Japanese troops, numerous soldiers removed their military uniforms and ran into a refugee area (a so-called “safety zone”).

On December 13, Japanese troops advanced into Nanjing Castle and started to sweep the Castle for enemy troops. The sweep continued until the 16<sup>th</sup>. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, an entrance ceremony, headed by General Matsui, was performed and the next day a memorial service was performed.

After the memorial service was completed, General Matsui returned to Shanghai on December 22. After that the, the 16<sup>th</sup> Division of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army garrisoned Nanjing until the end of January 1938.

As for casualties incurred between the battle of Shanghai and the Nanjing attack, according to the diary of General Matsui, the highest ranking commander of the Japanese Army in China, Japanese Army casualties were 24,000 and according to the military record of Senior General (上將) He Yingin (何應欽), who was the military governor of the Chinese Nationalist Army, 33,000 Chinese Army soldiers were killed.

Most of the Japanese Army casualties, unexpectedly high, resulted from fighting in Shanghai. Thereafter, the Japanese Army was locked in China for the next 8 years. The

beginning of a long war started with a huge number of casualties.

In December 1937, when Nanjing was captured, what happened then and there?

Nine years later, we Japanese were informed at the Tokyo Trials, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, that atrocities were committed by the Japanese Army in Nanjing.

The Tokyo Trials alleged that between December 13, 1937, when the Japanese Army entered Nanjing, and the end of January 1938, a number of assaults, rapes, plundering and arson were repeatedly committed by the Japanese Army. The victims of a massacre were said to be between 100,000 to 200,000. They claimed General Matsui, the highest ranking commander, did not take reasonable measures to prevent crimes and sentenced him to death by hanging. Hirota Koki, the foreign minister at the time, was also accused of allowing the Nanjing Incident, and other charges, and was executed by hanging as well.

When we were informed about this issue, we were under American occupation, starving and struggling to survive, so we did not give much thought about this issue.

Since then, decades passed. Did the atrocities which caused hundreds and thousands victims really happen? Were they any different from incidents that are commonly seen in battlefields? What happened really? Why don't we ask our people who were in Nanjing at the time? They were there at that time--they could tell us what happened really. Any Japanese with common sense would come to this conclusion.

What Japanese were in Nanjing at the time?

Needless to say, first and foremost, Japanese soldiers. Those who could explore and broadly examine Nanjing and understand the situation in Nanjing were not lower ranking soldiers but senior officers. Second, not only were the military in Nanjing, but more than 200 journalists entered Nanjing to report Nanjing's capture. Third, diplomats were in Nanjing in order to perform administrative duties and provide security after the occupation--they too must have had good knowledge concerning the situation in Nanjing.

The current author thought that these peoples' observations would be reliable. I found 67 persons who were in Nanjing and were still alive and got in contact with them. The period of contact was from 1984 to 1986.



At that time, almost half a century had passed since 1937. Among the 67 persons I identified, I listened to the stories of 35 and corresponded with 11 by mail. I was unable to communicate with the rest, as most were unfortunately ill.

Those people with whom I could meet and listen to were not necessarily knowledgeable about Nanjing then, or what happened then. Some were very knowledgeable about some areas, but knew nothing about other areas. Some visited certain places and nowhere else. Nonetheless, by fixing their statements together, like a jigsaw puzzle, you will get a picture of Nanjing at that time.

Among the 35 interviewees, I met with some only once and some ten times, but, in general, I met with them 3 times, twice to listen, and once to check my manuscript. For accuracy, I asked them to check the manuscript before publication—not just their stories but the entire manuscript.

I got approvals from half of them, a quarter of them asked me to change wording and correct misunderstandings, and another quarter asked me to rewrite everything, based on their instructions.

In 1987, I concluded all editing and published the book “Nanjing Incident – they told us” ”聞き書き 南京事件”, published by Tosho Shuppansha.

Since then, 15 years has passed. The book went out of print. But in 2002, newly titled, it was reprinted by Shogakukan Bunko, with an introduction by Ms. Sakurai Yoshiko, a well-known journalist.

The first book was 300 pages, published in a 79 x 109 mm format. For this new edition, I wanted to add a statement by Mr. Minami Masayoshi, who told me to withhold his statement for a while because it might have a negative effect on current friendly relations between China and Japan, and statements by Mr. Isayama Haruki and Mr. Otsuki Akira, who gave me their statements after publication of the first book.

If these additional statements were included in the new edition, then the number of pages would be too much for a *bunko* (paperback) edition, so I had to cut out some text not directly related with Nanjing, including background information of the interviewees. Eventually, I managed to include all 48 statements into the *bunko* edition.

Most of them were born during the Meiji era, the generation of our parents, grandparents,

and great-grandparents. From their statements we will vividly see what happened, or what did not happen, at the time of December 1937 in Nanjing. I believe the truth lies in their statements.

Ara Ken'ichi

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